

道德經

**Wonders
de
Fillosofleur**

Risteárd de Fillosofleur Mac Suibhne

Richard Mc Sweeney

Wonders de Fillosofleur

A Tao Te Ching Inspiration
道德經的靈感

By

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Isle of Éire
愛爾蘭的小島

WONDERS DE FILLOSOFLER

A Tao Te Ching Inspiration

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感
昔
今
思
來

“With feeling the Past and Present
be mindful of the Future.”

A

Richard Mc Sweeney’s addition and rendition
of an old Chinese idiom “感今思昔” dating

from the Song Dynasty, Liu Gong’s

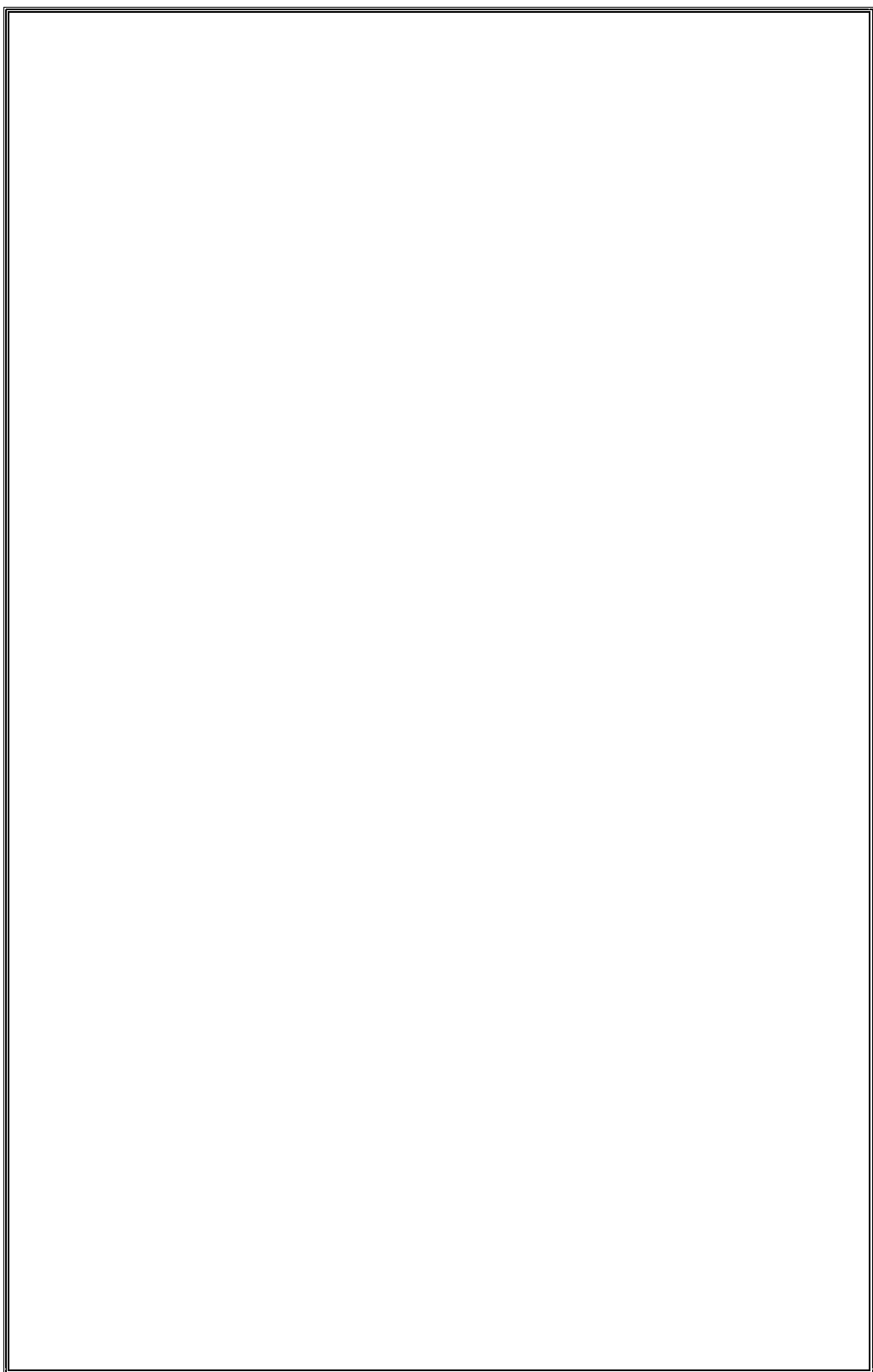
“Man Jiang Hong Yao Shou Zhong

Gu Shu Yi” lyrics:

“Sighing that we are apart more than we
are together, feeling the present
and thinking about the past.”

宋劉珙《滿江紅遙壽仲固叔誼》詞

“嘆離多聚少感今思昔”



Introduction

I commenced this challenging project on Sunday,
3rd March 2024 and concluded it on Saturday,
8th June 2024. The idea was to allow myself to
be inspired 靈感 by the 道德經 *Tao Te Ching*,
not chapter by chapter or even word by word
but rather segment by segment. In other words,
arbitrarily dividing each of its 81 chapters up
into inspirational segments; each chapter
on average consisting of some three,
four or more segments.

This culminated in a total of 352 consecutive
segments covering the entire *Tao Te Ching*.
Each segment was then provided with
an original question in the form of an
“I wonder, ...?”

For instance, the opening segment is presented
as follows, and, as do all, includes
the original Chinese text:

“I wonder, where did the idea of Tao come from?”
道可道非常道名可名非常名

You are encouraged to read each segment as
if it is you who is doing the wondering.
Accordingly, and as is your pleasure, place
the “I wonder” anywhere in the segment.

Every effort was made to keep the inspirations as
succinct as possible in keeping with the design
and spirit of the original Chinese text.

The Chinese text used is that provided by
the Chinese Text Project
website: <https://www.ctext.org/dao-de-jing>.

Intentionally no English or any other
translations were consulted.

The work it needs to be stated is not
in any way meant to be a
translation or an interpretation
of the *Tao Te Ching*.

Purely it is a work inspired by it.

‘Risteárd de Fillosofleúr Mac Suibhne’
being a self-styled nom de plume.

Richard Mc Sweeney

29th June 2024

Inspired by the
Tao Te Ching

道德經

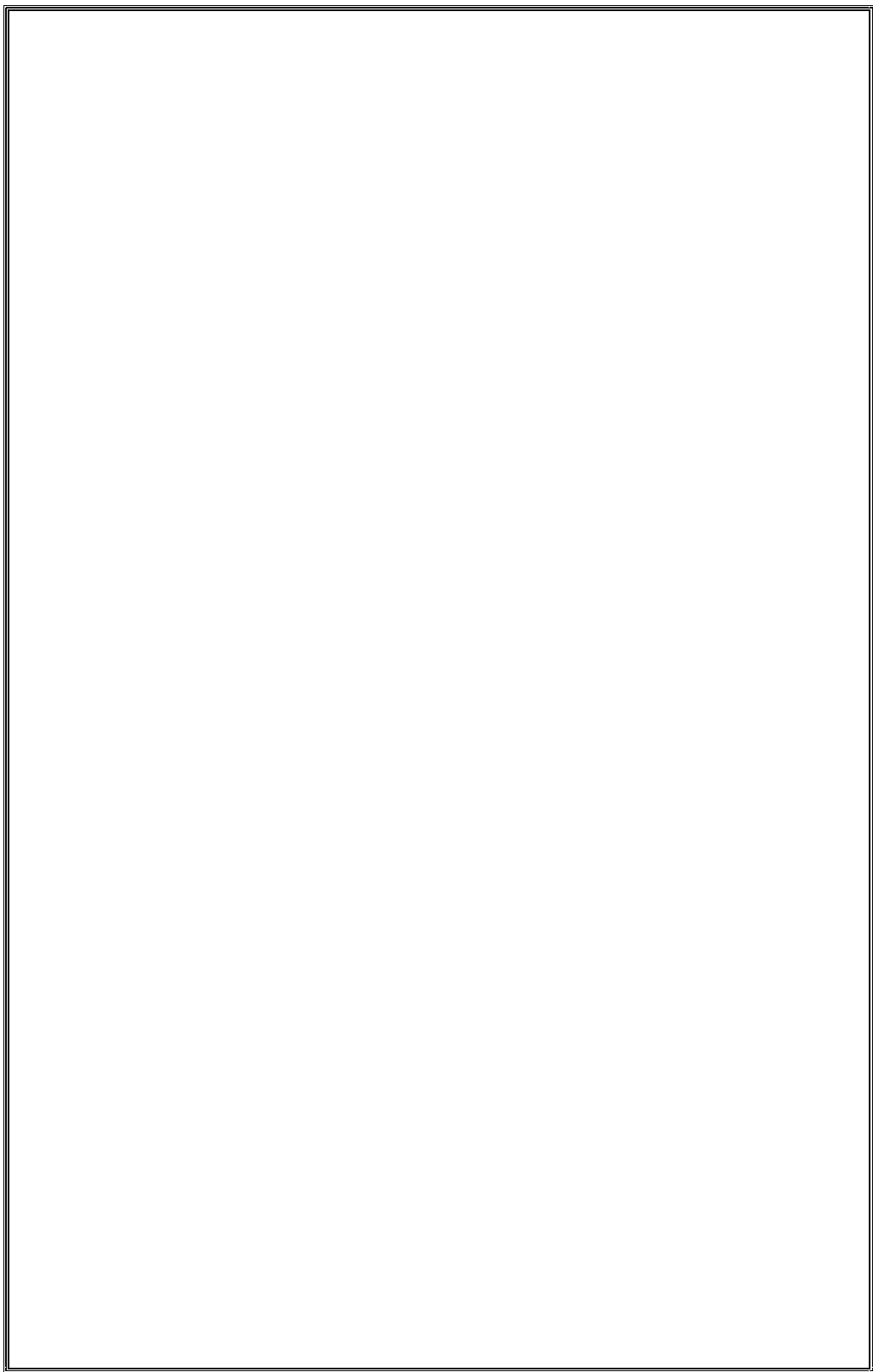
The “I wonders”

of

Rísteárd de Fillosofleur

Mac Suibhne

Isle of Éire



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“WHERE did the idea of ‘Tao come from?’”

1. 道可道非常道名可名非常名

“WHAT was it like, when there
were as of yet, no names
for anything?”

2. 無名天地之始有名萬物之母

“WHAT is it like to be without desire?”

3. 故常無欲以觀其妙常有欲以觀其徼

“IS mystery what is beyond
or is there a beyond of
even mystery?”

4. 此兩者同出而異名同謂
之玄玄之又玄衆妙之門

“WHY do we speak in terms
of beauty and ugliness?
Where did such a way of
thinking come from?”

5. 天下皆知美之為美斯惡已

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“WHY did we start to speak
in terms of good and
not good?”

6. 皆知善之為善斯不善已

“WHY did we start to think
in terms of long and short;
difficult and easy, and
existence and nonexistence?”

7. 故有無相生難易相成長短相較

“WHY did we start to think
interms of high and low;
sound this and sound that,
and before and after?”

8. 高下相傾音聲相和前後相隨

“WHAT would it be like,
to be doing not doing; to
be teaching not teaching?”

9. 是以聖人處無為之事行不言之教

“WHY is there everything?”

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10. 萬物作焉而不辭生而不有

“WHY do we humans alone
seem to be in the habit of
taking praise for creating
something, when
everything around us
doesn’t seem to?”

11. 為而不恃功成而弗居

“WHY there isn’t anything
or anyone, openly claiming
absolute responsibility,
for the existence of
everything?”

12. 夫唯弗居是以不去

“WHY is there so much
rivalry in the world?”

13. 不尚賢使民不爭不貴難得之貨
使民不為盜不見可欲使心不亂

“WHY it is that people feel
the need to govern others;

Page 4

why people feel the need
to be governed?”

14. 是以聖人之治虛其心
實其腹弱其志強其骨

“WHY is it we are kept in
the dark about so many things?
Are there certain kinds
of knowledge that wouldn't
be good for us?”

15. 常使民無知無欲使夫知者
不敢為也為無為則無不治

“WHY is it reality
is so profoundly deep;
so unfathomable?”

16. 道沖而用之或不盈淵兮似萬物之宗

“WHY is it we place light
somehow in opposition to
dark; having light overcome
the dark? Isn't there more
dark in the universe?”

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17. 挫其銳解其紛和其光同其塵

“DO we really have any
idea of what we are talking
about, when it comes to saying
anything about reality?”

18. 湛兮似或存吾不知誰之子象帝之先

“WHY is it we act so
much on impulse, seeing
that Nature itself doesn’t?”

19. 天地不仁以萬物為芻狗
聖人不仁以百姓為芻狗

“IS it correct anymore, or was it
ever correct: to be speaking
in terms of the heavens being
above and earth below?”

20. 天地之間其猶橐籥乎
虛而不屈動而愈出

“WHY is it we humans speak
so many different languages;

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why, couldn't we have
had just one?"

21. 多言數窮不如守中

"WHY is it we only
speak of life and death;
could there be more besides
these? Is life and death
one and the same or
one and the different?"

22. 谷神不死是謂玄牝

"WHY is it we like
to use such words as
'door' and 'portal'
when trying to
comprehend reality?"

23. 玄牝之門是謂天地根

"WHY it is that we have only an
inkling of the mysterious? What is it
about mystery that makes it so
appealing; so engaging?"

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24. 綿綿若存用之不勤

“WHY is reality, as we
know it, existing for so long?
Then again, how long is long?
Had reality a beginning?”

25. 天長地久天地所以能長且
久者以其不自生故能長生

“WHY it is people are happy
being first and not happy being
second or even last?
Who is there that can be
other than where they are?”

26. 是以聖人後其身而身先外其身而身存

“WHY on a global scale is it
we are losing our sense of
empathy? The taking of
any life, especially innocent
lives is in anyone’s
book wrong.”

27. 非以其無私耶故能成其私

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“WHY is it we have such
a huge quantity of water on
this planet? Where did it
come from? Was there
more or less of it say
a million years ago?”

28. 上善若水水善利萬物而不
爭處衆人之所惡故幾於道

“WHY do we place our
trust in words; in language?”

29. 居善地心善淵與善仁言善
信正善治事善能動善時

“WHY is there anger; why
do we let ourselves get angry?”

30. 夫唯不爭故無尤

“WHY is it we have a tendency
to be excessive? Excessive
rain impoverishes the soil;
loud noises frighten away
the birds and fishes.”

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31. 持而盈之不如其已揣而銳之不可長保

“WHAT is it about certain
things, or about ourselves that
we overly like to hoard them?”

32. 金玉滿堂莫之能守富貴而驕自遺其咎

“WHY is it reality is so obscure:
that everywhere is seemingly
seamlessly returning
back into itself?”

33. 功遂身退天之道

“WHAT would the world be like,
if we didn't from time to time,
feel the need to embrace
one another?”

34. 載營魄抱一能無離乎

“IS reality some kind of breath?”

35. 專氣致柔能嬰兒乎

“HAVE we been something already
or are we on our way to

Page 10

becoming something; whatever
that something may be?
What are we now?"

36. 滌除玄覽能無疵乎

"WHY is it governance at times
gives the impression of great
craftiness, slyness, trickery,
duplicity and chicanery
at home with itself?"

37. 愛民治國能無知乎

"IS it possible, to go beyond
reality as we know it? Is
the universe really what it
is: according to what
we say it is?"

38. 天門開闔能為雌乎

"HOW far has human intelligence
come; how far can it reach? Is it yet
near or far from that point?"

39. 明白四達能無知乎

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“WHO what or otherwise,
generates everything?
What about, when it comes
to sustaining them?”

40. 生之畜之生而不有為而
不恃長而不宰是謂玄德

“WHY nothing is less important
than something? Reality
seems to be made up of more
nothing than something.”

41. 三十輻共一轂當其無有車之用

“IS reality something that is fashioned;
continuously being fashioned
by some invisible something;
whatever that might be?”

42. 埏埴以為器當其無有器之用

“WHY is it we haven’t noticed
the great usefulness of the
seemingly useless?
Is nothing, really nothing?”

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43. 鑿戶牖以為室當其無有室之用

“WHY is it we think this way about
some things, and that another?
And what if, our thinking
on them from the outset,
is way too narrow.”

44. 故有之以為利無之以為用

“WHAT is it we are looking at
in colours; what listening
to in sounds, and what
tasting in flavours?”

45. 五色令人目盲五音令
人耳聾五味令人口爽

“WHAT is it about sanity
that makes it so easy for it to visit
insanity, and yet insanity has
such a desperate time of it
trying to return
to sanity?”

46. 令人心發狂難得之貨令人行妨

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“WHY are we so taken by what we
see; what is it about sight
that, inclines us say towards
possession of that seen?”

47. 是以聖人為腹不為目故去彼取此

“WHY it is that great disasters
such as wars, earthquakes and
flooding, seem not to be
really real, if, they are
happening somewhere else?”

48. 寵辱若驚貴大患若身

“WHY is it we are becoming
so indifferent to disgrace?
Is not dishonesty a disgrace?
How about the destruction
of the biosphere?”

49. 何謂寵辱若驚

“WHAT is it about us or about
this place: this planet that
causes us to be so afraid

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of everything?”

50. 寵為下得之若驚失之若驚是謂寵辱若驚

“WHY is it we have a body:
this physical structure with
its various rivers and
streams and gentle breath?
What should we say we are?”

51. 何謂貴大患若身吾所以有大患
者為吾有身及吾無身吾有何患

“WHY is it we love our self; why is it
we love others? Why is it we feel
loved? What is this way of
life we call loving?”

52. 故貴以身為天下若可寄天下
愛以身為天下若可託天下

“WHY is it sometimes, even
though we are looking right
at something, we just don't
see it? The same holds
true when listening.

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Strange.”

53. 視之不見名曰夷聽之不聞
名曰希搏之不得名曰微

“WHY we are inclined to speak of the oneness of everything? What is it about oneness that gives us the feeling we have found the essence?”

54. 此三者不可致詰故混而
為一其上不皦其下不昧

“WHY is it many think everything came from something; many too thinking it came from nothing? Why don't we this yet know?”

55. 繩繩不可名復歸於無物是謂
無狀之狀無物之象是謂惚恍

“FROM how far back does time come; to how far forward will it go? Then again, is time really real or merely a

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thought formation of ours?”

56. 迎之不見其首隨之不見其後

“WHAT did the peoples of
the Paleolithic period
(roughly 2.5 million years
ago to 10,000 B.C.) consider
the ancient past to be?”

57. 執古之道以御今之有能知古始是謂道紀

“WHY it is that sages of old, were
able to be so profound in their
thought; given they had so
little knowledge at
their disposal?”

58. 古之善為士者微妙玄通深不可識

“WHY is it so difficult to put
reality into words?
Could it be because language
is intrinsically unsuitable for
such a mighty task?”

59. 夫唯不可識故強為之容

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“WHY has etiquette been so
downgraded these days?
Are engineers considering
it unnecessary for their
artificial intelligences?”

60. 豫兮若冬涉川猶兮若畏四鄰儼兮其若容

“WHAT is it about emptiness
that gives the feeling of great
fullness? How full of
emptiness is reality? Is what
we call full, empty in fact?”

61. 致虛極守靜篤萬物並作吾以觀復

“HOW is going forward any
different from going
backward; backward from
sideward? And what of
upward from downward?”

62. 夫物芸芸各復歸其根歸根曰靜是謂復命

“WHY is that which is always
changing doesn't seem to be
changing? What is it about

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change that it doesn't
appear to change?"

63. 復命曰常知常曰明不知常妄作凶

“WHAT is it about the constant
continuous that can
be known? Does it have a
beginning; how about an end?
Would such a knowing be useful?”

64. 知常容容乃公公乃王王乃
天天乃道道乃久沒身不殆

“WHY is it rulers so quickly forget how
to truly rule? What is it about positions
of power that can cause occupants
to be so untrue?”

65. 太上下知有之其次親而
譽之其次畏之其次侮之

“WHY there is so much trust of
the wrong kind in the world
today; what has happened
to trust of the right kind?”

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66. 信不足焉有不信焉悠兮其貴言

“WHY is it, people have a
propensity at times: to claim
that it was they alone who did
all the heavy lifting, when
in fact they didn’t?”

67. 功成事遂百姓皆謂我自然

“HOW is it after all these
millennia of human existence,
we still haven’t figured out
how to live nobly?”

68. 大道廢有仁義智慧出有大偽

“WHY is it social order can break
down so easily and so quickly? Does
society by nature have an Achilles
heel? If so, what might it be?”

69. 六親不和有孝慈國家昏亂有忠臣

“WHAT would it be like, if
we were to renounce all religious
beliefs and discard all our scientific

Page 20

insights, and then to take it
from there?”

70. 絕聖棄智民利百倍

“WHAT will it take for people to
realize that artificial intelligences
are just that: artificial?
How come artificiality is
the new natural?”

71. 絕仁棄義民復孝慈

“WHY is it we humans have a
tendency to trick each other?
And of our scheming to deprive
the biosphere of its essences,
what shall we say?”

72. 絕巧棄利盜賊無有

“WHY is it profound old ways
of thinking aren’t being used
more today? Is it because
today’s world prefers to
be making things

Page 21

up as it goes?”

73. 此三者以為文不足

“WHY is it we are becoming
deficient in our ability to
appreciate the simplicity
of reality? Why are
we trivializing its
sophistication?”

74. 故令有所屬見素抱樸少私寡欲

“WHY is it learning seems
to give us so much of a
headache, in the sense that it
can make us preoccupied
with caginess?”

75. 絕學無憂唯之與阿相去幾何

“SHOULD we really be talking in
terms of good and bad; bad
and good as if we were
talking about two distinctly
different matters?”

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76. 善之與惡相去若何

“WHY is it we are a lifeform
that is afraid? Could not we
have been a lifeform that
has no use for fear?”

77. 人之所畏不可不畏

“WHY is it all other lifeforms
living on the planet
appear neither to have
rich nor poor among them?
How come we are into
such a sorting?”

78. 荒兮其未央哉衆人熙
熙如享太牢如春登臺

“WHY are we so preoccupied
with growing up; a growing up that
involves discarding the simple
pleasures, wonders and joys
of toddlerhood?”

79. 我獨怕兮其未兆如嬰兒

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之未孩儻儻兮若無所歸

“WHY is it we don’t see
everyone in ourselves;
ourseleves in everyone? If we
did, who then would ever
be lonely or ever wish
to hurt anyone?”

80. 衆人皆有餘而我獨若遺

“WHY great intelligence can
come across, not just some
of the time as being quite
narrow, but most of the
time? It should be
otherewise.”

81. 我愚人之心也哉沌沌
兮俗人昭昭我獨若昏

“WHY so often is great stupidity
considered exceptional intelligence?
Surely, downright stupidity
is always just that:
downright stupidity.”

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82. 俗人察察我獨悶悶

“WHY is it we aren’t inclined to
give things a second thought;
why this anxious tumbling
over ourselves to get to
the next line of thinking?”

83. 澹兮其若海颺兮若無止

“WHY is it people give up on
themselves before they have
ever even tried to discover
what it is they think
they cannot do?
If not now, when?”

84. 衆人皆有以而我獨頑似鄙

“WHY is it we place so much more
emphasis on pointing out how very
different we are from one another,
when in truth, we are
so very alike?”

85. 我獨異於人而貴食母

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“WHY is it we are becoming
so accepting of token gestures
of virtue? Are we expecting
our artificial intelligences
to be paragons of virtue?”

86. 孔德之容唯道是從

“WHY is it, we are surrounded
by so much elusivity; even
our self can oft feel as if
it is a mystery helplessly
gazing upon itself?”

87. 道之為物唯恍唯惚

“WHY it is that reality appears to be
a multi-hued image always folding
in and out and about itself?”

88. 忽兮恍兮其中有象恍兮忽兮其中有物

“WHAT lifeforms have endured
since the coming into shape
of this planet? None at all.
Are not rock, water, fire and

Page 26

wind lifeforms of a kind?”

89. 窈兮冥兮其中有精其精甚真其中有信

“DOES reality really have what
we term past, present and
future? Why are we layering
it with such a provincial
planetary way of thinking?”

90. 自古及今其名不去以閱衆甫

“WHY is it what we say something is
we think it actually is that? What is
it about knowing that makes
us want to lock it
in as a fact?”

91. 吾何以知衆甫之狀哉以此

“WHY is it we have become ever
so fixated on the straight line,
when everything about us,
and in the heavens, and
the beyond is curviform?”

92. 曲則全枉則直窪則盈

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弊則新少則得多則惑

“WHY is it so many sages
of old, though in agreement
on many things, would seem
to be more in disagreement;
even contradict each other?”

93. 是以聖人抱一為天下式

“WHY is it, when you
self-present your thoughts
to the world, you are
frowned upon; yet, isn't
self-presentation the
natural way of Nature?”

94. 不自見故明不自是故彰

“WHAT is it about self we
should keep to ourself; what
is it about self we should
share? What is this which
we call self anyway?
Who knows?”

95. 不自伐故有功不自矜故長

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“WHY is it we are so
competitive? Is it natural
or is it something we have
fashioned? Do we need to
compete to be complete?”

96. 夫唯不爭故天下莫能與之爭

“WAS there a time: back in no
one at all can say when, that
the planet had reached a
state of completeness or is
it still on course for it?”

97. 古之所謂曲則全者豈
虛言哉誠全而歸之

“WHY have we forsaken the
age-old pleasure of reading
the weather: by looking at
the sky or the landscape
or feeling the wind?”

98. 希言自然故飄風不終朝驟雨不終日

“HOW long has it been now,
since we have all but given

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up on having the wondrous
caring ways of Nature
be our ever-present
faithful teacher?”

99. 孰為此者天地天地尚不能久而況於人乎

“WHY is it we are helplessly
letting ourselves become
one with our artificial
intelligences?
Incorporate them, yes;
but self-surrender?
No.”

100. 故從事於道者道者同於道
德者同於德失者同於失

“IS reality; and for use of
better words: ‘happy’ say with
our happinesses, and ‘sad’
with our sadnesses? If yes,
what would that imply?”

101. 同於道者道亦樂得之

“WHY is it, we are so easily

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inclined to accept and follow
religious beliefs; why so too
unquestioningly ideologies
and scientific theories?”

102. 同於德者德亦樂得之

“WHY is it the world has let
itself be in a state where it is
easier than not for it to fall
in with heinous crimes
committed by itself
against itself?”

103. 同於失者失亦樂得之

“WHY is it we are so anxious
to abandon our first trust,
namely Nature? Has
Nature ever let us down?
How about our
artificial intelligences?”

104. 信不足焉有不信焉

“TO what extent do we know
what we are talking about

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when it comes to our
origin(s)? The theory
of evolution has us but
standing on tiptoes.”

105. 企者不立跨者不行自見者不明

“WHY is being humble
looked upon as being some
kind of weakness when
the humility of trees, streams,
valleys and hills is all
about strength?”

106. 自是者不彰自伐者無功自矜者不長

“WHY are we so slow to
change things about
ourselves that we know
well are ever-distancing
ourselves from our more
beautiful selves?”

107. 其在道也曰餘食贅行物
或惡之故有道者不處

“WHY is it, once we came up

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with them: the concepts ‘before’
and ‘after’ we settled on them
and said, with these alone
we will be satisfied?”

108. 有物混成先天地生

“WHY is it, we think
the universe is one or even
that it could be one of countless
universes? Is there anyone
who will say it is neither?”

109. 寂兮寥兮獨立不改周行
而不殆可以為天下母

“WHY is it we are in the habit
of naming everything? That
being not enough, we
then say, the named is
what the thing is.
But is it?”

110. 吾不知其名字之曰道強為之名曰大

“IS the universe on the return
journey: having already been

Page 33

as it were? If so, then, what
must its outward journey
have been like?”

111. 大曰逝逝曰遠遠曰反

“WHY is it we solely associate
a person’s greatness with
their positions of power
in society? Should we
not inquire of their
wife or husband?”

112. 故道大天大地大王亦大

“WHAT is it about political
power that it can have
such a free hand to corrupt
individuals, groups and
even a whole society?”

113. 域中有四大而王居其一焉

“WHY is it we are almost
mindlessly willing to trust
ourselves, our lives, our
future and the planet

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to our problematics:
our artificialities?”

114. 人法地地法天天法道道法自然

“WHY is it we are inclined
to only consider the
visible tree and not
so much take into account
its roots; a hill and not
so much its bedrock?”

115. 重為輕根靜為躁君

“WHY is it we have forgotten
where we have come from?
Do we know where we are;
where we are going?
By chance, have we
been here before?”

116. 是以聖人終日行不離輜重

“WHY is it, when we look at
certain things; feel or scent them,
we can for the longest time
ever, clearly recall having

Page 35

experienced them?”

117. 雖有榮觀燕處超然

“WHAT changes are we
going through as we
systematically let our artificial
intelligences run our lives
for us?

Are we still us or not?”

118. 奈何萬乘之主而以身輕天下

“WHY is it that so-called,
historically good decisions,
have so easily proven
themselves to have been
not at all good?

What are we doing today?”

119. 輕則失本躁則失君

“WHY aren’t there any traces
left of yesterday in today?
Does such wondering make
any sense, I wonder?
Something has made sense.”

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120. 善行無轍迹善言無瑕譏善數不用籌策

“WHY is it with all the knowledge
we have amassed we still
don't get it: destroying
the biosphere is
absurdity on a brakeless
roller coaster?”

121. 善閉無關楗而不可開
善結無繩約而不可解

“WHY is it a mind; a home,
a neighborhood, a region, a
country; even the entire world
can let itself easily
believe in falsifications?”

122. 是以聖人常善救人故無棄人
常善救物故無棄物是謂襲明

“WHY is it, the not so good
at practicing honesty, aren't
more influenced by those
who are? Has perhaps honesty
some displeasing side to it?”

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123. 故善人者不善人之師不善人者善人之資

“WHY is it even seemingly
simple mysteries somehow,
still remain beyond our
reach, even though we use
the scientific method and
artificial intelligence?”

124. 不貴其師不愛其資雖智大迷是謂要妙

“WHY is it, in these times
especially, we want to be more
female than male, more
male than female;
be neither one nor the
other: be agender?”

125. 知其雄守其雌為天下谿

“WHY is it we leave our
precious childhood sense
of wonderment out of our
adulthood? Is this really a
sensible thing to be doing?”

126. 為天下谿常德不離復歸於嬰兒

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“WHY is it we continue
to wear the same old
hand me down threadbare
attitudes, when it comes
to the colour of our skin?”

127. 知其白守其黑為天下式

“WHAT is it about reality that
gives the feeling everything;
including ourselves,
is somehow on a
homecoming journey?”

128. 為天下式常德不忒復歸於無極

“WHY is it so challenging at
times to go with the flow
of things working themselves
out, and the not yet having
worked themselves out?”

129. 知其榮守其辱為天下谷

“WHY is it we knowingly
continue to do things
that are obviously

Page 39

destructive; definitely
immoral, not to mention
downright ridiculous?”

130. 為天下谷常德乃足復歸於樸

“WHY is it knowledge once
given expression in language
and even physical form
is no longer knowledge
but something else?
What is that else?”

131. 樸散則為器聖人用之
則為官長故大制不割

“WHY is it people want to
control: control their homes,
towns, cities, country, regions;
even the whole world?
What of the Moon and Mars?”

132. 將欲取天下而為之吾見其不得已

“WHY is it we seem to be
abandoning the profound
idea of reality being that

Page 40

which is most sacred?
Holding to the sacred
keeps us noble.”

133. 天下神器不可為也為者敗之執者失之

“WHY are we still of the firm
belief that we are ‘in front’
of yesterday: yesterday is
behind us? Could it not be
in fact right next to us?”

134. 故物或行或隨或歔或
吹或強或羸或挫或隳

“WHY do we push things to
their extreme? A pressing
case in point being our
relentless turning of the
planet inside out to
satisfy our needs.”

135. 是以聖人去甚去奢去泰

“WHY is it leaders are still
resorting to force of arms
to resolve all kinds of

Page 41

issues? What is so wrong
with talking things out
over a meal?”

136. 以道佐人主者不以兵強天下其事好還

“WHY don’t we look upon the
‘warful’ destruction of
a country as being different
from the smashing of
a willow pattern plate
on the floor?”

137. 師之所處荊棘生焉大軍之後必有凶年

“WHY is it people become
consumed by the power
of power? What is it
about power that can
cause people to lose
all perspective?”

138. 善有果而已不敢以取強

“WHY do we continue to use
the expression ‘non-violence’
to encourage not doing

Page 42

anything harmful
for it can cause others
to re-act violently?”

139. 果而勿矜果而勿伐果而勿驕

“WHY is it we alone have to
make so much of an effort
to master ourselves when
all other lifeforms seem
to be able to do it
so naturally?”

140. 果而不得已果而勿強

“WHY is it we think of
ourselves as being young,
middle-aged or old? Isn't
it high time we let go of
such a restrictive way
of thinking?”

141. 物壯則老是謂不道不道早已

“WHAT will it take for us to
cease inventing implements
that are intentionally

Page 43

designed to hurt others
or damage planet
home sweet home?”

142. 夫佳兵者不祥之器物
或惡之故有道者不處

“WHY is it our arms, legs,
hands and feet are shaped
the way they are; in fact
our entire body from
head to toe?

Why are we shaped so?”

143. 君子居則貴左用兵則貴右

“WHY is it peace has so much
difficulty coping with conflict,
while conflict it seems has
no bother trampling peace
right into the mud?”

144. 兵者不祥之器非君子之器
不得已而用之恬淡為上

“WHY is it we seemingly just
can't get on with one

Page 44

another? Why this taking
land off of each other?
Isn't the world big enough
for everyone?"

145. 勝而不美而美之者是樂殺人

“HOW long more must we
wait for humanity to realize
that waging war is not
advancing our species
a single step in the
right direction?"

146. 夫樂殺人者則不可以得志於天下矣

“WHY is mourning so
one-sided; for should not
we be also mourning for
those who have lost
themselves in the taking
of another's life?"

147. 吉事尚左凶事尚右偏將軍居
左上將軍居右言以喪禮處之

“WHY are we still using war

Page 45

to settle our differences? How
many wars do we have to
conduct; have to put up with,
before enough is enough?”

148. 殺人之衆以哀悲泣之戰勝以喪禮處之

“WHY is it we aren’t always
conscious that words are
only handles, and that in
themselves are no more
than a breath upon
the breeze?”

149. 道常無名樸雖小天下莫能臣也

“WHY is it, though we are
born of and from Nature,
we continually have
difficulty following along
naturally with the flow
of Nature?”

150. 侯王若能守之萬物將自賓

“WHY is it taking us so long,
to fully realize, that without

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our help the planet revolves
to show the sun, moon and
stars rising and setting?”

151. 天地相合以降甘露民莫之令而自均

“WHY is it we are inclined to
go too far; why can’t we stop
when we ought to stop?
What is it about enough that
we find to be not enough?”

152. 始制有名名亦既有夫亦
將知止知止所以不殆

“WHY is it we aren’t living
more fully in harmony
with Nature given all
what we know about
it and ourselves?”

153. 譬道之在天下猶川谷之與江海

“WHY is it we can so easily
convince ourselves that we
know ourselves, yet in truth
we have no idea who or

Page 47

what we are or where
we came from?”

154. 知人者智自知者明勝
人者有力自勝者強

“WHY is it we are so slow to
appreciate all the wonderful
things we have got going for
us in our daily life?

Take a moment to reflect on it.”

155. 知足者富強行者有志

“WHY is it we can’t seem to
free ourselves from our creation,
namely time? Why, with
knowing well it is a problem,
do we continue to use it?”

156. 不失其所者久死而不亡者壽

“WHY is it we don’t yet realize
that there is nowhere where
reality doesn’t exist? Yet
having said that though, do
we know what reality is?”

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157. 大道汎兮其可左右

“WHAT are we depending
upon unknown to ourselves?
How far would that go to
explaining why we feel so
very much at home
with the unknown?”

158. 萬物恃之而生而不辭功成不名有

“WHY is it we are so slow
to accept that Nature is
everywhere taking the very
best care of us? Our artificial
intelligences don't do care.”

159. 衣養萬物而不為主常無欲可名於小

“WHY is it we accept being
lorded over; what is it
about us that causes us to be
so ridiculously submissive?
Authorities don't grow
on trees.”

160. 萬物歸焉而不為主可名為大

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“WHY is it we consider some
things great which shouldn’t
be considered great, and
things we ought to consider
great, we ignore?
What is that?”

161. 以其終不自為大故能成其大

“WHY is it we can’t have a
continually peaceful world?
Why this everyday upheaval
and unfairness? Why with
this all knowing don’t we do?”

162. 執大象天下往往而不害安平大

“WHY is it we love music so
much? What is it about
music that causes it to
touch us so deeply?
Is silence then also
a kind of music?”

163. 樂與餌過客止

“WHY is it at times bitter tastes

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rather sweet; sweet bitter?
Why is it silence can sound
like noise; noise silence?”

164. 道之出口淡乎其無味視之不足見聽之不足聞用之不足既

“WHY is it that we don’t keep
in mind more that when
we need to do something,
there is a before to the doing
and an after to it?”

165. 將欲歛之必固張之將欲弱之必固強之

“WHY is it we are more
interested in what we can
receive than what we give:
seeing that we didn’t
give in the first place?
First let us give.”

166. 將欲廢之必固興之將欲奪之必固與之

“WHY is it individuals,
companies, governments
and even academic

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institutions, feel the need
to be excessively secretive
with the public?”

167. 是謂微明柔弱勝剛強魚不可
脫於淵國之利器不可以示人

“WHY is it we don’t keep in
mind that Planet Earth came
into existence without our
help but that with our
interference it could
be no more?”

168. 道常無為而無不為

“WHY is it we have such
difficulty accepting and in
turn putting into practice
the way we ought to
live nobly? Why this
procrastination?”

169. 侯王若能守之萬物將自化

“WHY is it when we think of
simplicity, simplicity isn’t

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at all what comes to mind?

Could it be we are
somehow over simplifying
simplicity?”

170. 化而欲作吾將鎮之以無名之樸

“WHY is it there is so much
desire for material things
in the world? What is
this obsession with material
abundance and wealth?”

171. 無名之樸夫亦將無欲

“WHY is it we can’t just let
ourselves be still; why this
constant low frequency
humming, rumbling,
grinding running
through everything?”

172. 不欲以靜天下將自定

“WHY is it moral integrity is
not an attribute we can easily
associate with our artificial

Page 53

intelligences? Can we
create moral algorithms?”

173. 上德不德是以有德下
德不失德是以無德

“WHY is it, when we with well
being aware, that there is a
nobler way of doing things;
say settling disputes, we
settle for the shameful?”

174. 上德無為而無以為
下德為之而有以為

“WHY is it we are always striving
to be kind; why not just simply
be kind? Being kind would
seem to be a very natural
thing to be doing.”

175. 上仁為之而無以為
上義為之而有以為

“WHY is it we have a habit of
enforcing our intentions

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on others; enforcing our
logic as if it was the only
expression of logic
that exists?”

176. 上禮為之而莫之應則攘臂而扔之

“WHAT is it about this age;
this age of our artificial
intelligences, that gives us
the impression we somehow
have put ritual all behind us?”

177. 故失道而後德失德而後仁
失仁而後義失義而後禮

“WHEN does confusion begin
in any given situation? Is it
something immediate or
have we unbeknown to
ourselves put it into
place beforehand?”

178. 夫禮者忠信之薄而亂之首

“WHY is it we are unable
to predict the future?

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Perhaps we could if only we were
to let go of the idea of time.
Time is the problem maker.”

179. 前識者道之華而愚之始

“WHAT is really real; what is
really not real? Is not the real
and the not real of a
similar same sameness and
a different difference?”

180. 是以大丈夫處其厚不居其薄
處其實不居其華故去彼取此

“WHY is it we keep coming up with
theories about what reality is?
Why is what we come up with
still way too narrow?
Reality is ‘the’ mystery.”

181. 昔之得一者天得一以清地得
一以寧神得一以靈谷得一以盈萬
物得一以生侯王得一以為天下貞

“WHY is it the planets stay in

Page 56

the orbits they are in; why don't
they all of a day lose their way
and float way off out
beyond the sun?"

182. 其致之天無以清將恐
裂地無以寧將恐發

"WHY is it when it comes
to the spiritual we are still only
thinking in terms of a God
or gods; angels: spiritual beings?
Reality is spirituality."

183. 神無以靈將恐歇谷無以盈將恐竭

"WHAT is keeping the world not
just generally good but overall
very good indeed, in spite of
a multitude of bad things
continually happening?"

184. 萬物無以生將恐滅侯
王無以貴高將恐蹶

"WHY is it we so easily loose
sight of origins, roots,

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dawnings, inception,
foundations, seeds,
wellsprings, etymologies:
fons et origo?"

185. 故貴以賤為本高以下為基

"HOW is it we can think a way
of life is truly successful, if on
the way to it, children were
deliberately deprived of
their youthful self?"

186. 是以侯王自稱孤寡不穀此非以
賤為本耶非乎故致數譽無譽

"WHY is it so hard to keep
things simple? What is
this fascination we have
with materials that
glitter and sparkle?"

187. 不欲碌碌如玉珞珞如石

"IS today only today because
we have agreed to say it is;
what if we were to say it is

Page 58

tomorrow returned?”

188. 反者道之動弱者道之用

“WHY we think non-existence
isn’t existence, and that
existence isn’t something
other than non-existence
transformed?”

189. 天下萬物生於有有生於無

“WHY is it we don’t laugh
more often: at our
multifaceted attempts down
through the millennia, at
saying what we believe
reality to be or not be?”

190. 上士聞道勤而行之中士聞道若存若
亡下士聞道大笑之不笑不足以爲道

“WHY is it at times we feel
like something is familiar to
us about we somehow
having experienced before
this thing called life?”

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191. 故建言有之明道若昧
進道若退夷道若類

“IS changing an illusion of some
kind? Everything it seems is
changing, yet it feels at
times as if it isn’t.
Why is this so?”

192. 上德若谷太白若辱廣德若
不足建德若偷質真若渝

“RESPECTFULLY why is it that
in these stone-hearted days,
the still much believed in
One God Above all gods
is staying so
deafeningly silent?”

193. 大方無隅大器晚成大音希聲大象
無形道隱無名夫唯道善貸且成

“WHY is it we think in terms
of mathematics; not alone
think in terms of it but
that we completely

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trust it? Something isn't
adding up here."

194. 道生一一生二二生三三生萬物

"WHY is it we don't want to
accept the most obvious,
namely: that from the
dark emerges the light
and into the dark is it
everywhere returning?"

195. 萬物負陰而抱陽沖氣以為和

"HOW is it possible for us to
continue on describing
ourselves as noble human
beings: when we allow
our leaders to yield to
wars and atrocities?"

196. 人之所惡唯孤寡不穀而王公以為稱

"AND as strange as strange as it
sounds: Why is it that when
we grasp a fistful of air,
we don't notice we have

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reduced it by a fistful?”

197. 故物或損之而益或益之而損

“WHY still there are people
holding the view: that even
though I always act violently,
I will at a ripe old age die
peacefully of natural causes?”

198. 人之所教我亦教之強梁者
不得其死吾將以為教父

“WHY is it we look upon
granite as being only hard
and weighty? Perhaps
and who knows in ancient
days it was considered
to be soft and light.”

199. 天下之至柔馳騁天下之至堅

“WHO knows well how to do not doing?
Is not doing not doing somehow
a form of doing? Have I said
something that makes

Page 62

perfect sense or no sense?”

200. 無有入無間吾是以知無為之有益

“DO we know what we are
talking about when it comes
to extraterrestrial entities?
Oh, would that we would
be more open to being
by them taught.”

201. 不言之教無為之益天下希及之

“WHY is it we consider
something worse or better
than something else for
know we well don't we: that
what is good for us is
good, the not not?”

202. 名與身孰親 身與貨孰多得與亡孰病

“WHY is it we keep losing sight
of the bigger picture?
What is all this bothersome
grabbing and trying to
hold on to things as

Page 63

if for perpetuity?”

203. 是故甚愛必大費多藏必厚亡

“HOW many times a day do
we pass up the golden chance
to even be momentarily
contented? Why can't
we contentedly let
ourselves free to be?”

204. 知足不辱知止不殆可以長久

“WHY is it some days we see
everything is of the same sameness
while on other days we see only
the different difference?”

205. 大成若缺其用不弊

“WHY is it there seems to be
more to oceans than meets
the eye? Are their beings who
would think them to be solids
and the landscapes liquids?”

206. 大盈若沖其用不窮

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“WHY is it when even
considered a little differently,
things are very far from
being what we had
supposed them to be?
A mystery it is surely.”

207. 大直若屈大巧若拙大辯若訥

“WHY is it the universe is
the way it is; why is it not
any other way? Besides,
what is it anyway? Are its
galaxies living entities
of some kind?”

208. 躁勝寒靜勝熱

“WHY is it the stillness in
everything seems to be
so full of movement?
Is there then no movement
without stillness; stillness
without movement?”

209. 清靜為天下正

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“Why is it we assume
everything is there for our use alone?
Long before our sacred books we
were by way of a self-given right
coercing animals.”

210. 天下有道卻走馬以糞
天下無道戎馬生於郊

“WHY is it we place so much
emphasis on happiness:
on how to be happy and
stay happy, when what we
are truly in need of is
contentment of heart?”

211. 禍莫大於不知足咎莫大於
欲得故知足之足常足矣

“WHY is it that we don’t keep
in mind that without having
many things there is still so
much we can appreciate?
Why all this first having to have?”

212. 不出戶知天下不闕牖見天道

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“WHY is it we are so satisfied
with merely having a handful
of ‘just knowings’? How
can say, just knowing where the
sun rises and sets be enough?”

213. 其出彌遠其知彌少

“WHAT is about having lived
and studied in other lands
that leaves you with this
feeling you can’t talk away
happily about it to your
native people?”

214. 是以聖人不行而知
不見而名不為而成

“WHY is it we don’t yet
realize we live not in a day,
an hour or a moment,
but in everyplace we are
at? Live in the walking
you are at.”

215. 為學日益為道日損

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“WHY is it taking us so long
to do nothing really well?
Not alone nothing, but why
is it taking us forever to do
something really well; say peace?”

216. 損之又損以至於無
為無為而無不為

“WHY is it so difficult to stay
steadfast with what you know
well is emotionally, physically
and intellectually working
ever so well for you?”

217. 取天下常以無事及其
有事不足以取天下

“WHY is it we don’t live our
lives as to be conscious that
being great-hearted;
great-minded, involves
more than just looking
out for oneself?”

218. 聖人無常心以百姓心為心

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“WHY is it so easy to be not
good and quite a challenge
to be good? Shouldn't it be easy
to do good and most difficult
to do not good? Strange.”

219. 善者吾善之不善者吾亦善之德善

“WHY is it there is such a lack
of trust in trust in the world?
How came it to be that we
are replacing our trust in
Nature with trust in cartomancy
and artificial intelligence?”

220. 信者吾信之不信者吾亦信之德信

“WHY is it we haven't yet learnt
to notice, appreciate and put
into practice: the everywhere
about beauty and power of
enriching indifference?”

221. 聖人在天下歛歛為天下渾其心
百姓皆注其耳目聖人皆孩之

“WHY is it we don't know

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why it is we think in terms
of holding on to something
that we are not meant
to be holding on to?
Why can't we just be joyfully?"

222. 出生入死生之徒十有三死之
徒十有三人之生動之死地十
有三夫何故以其生生之厚

“WHY is it we can so easily
fill our minds with ideas
and beliefs that don't even have
the vaguest of associations
with the actuality of
our existence?"

223. 蓋聞善攝生者陸行不
遇兇虎入軍不被甲兵

“WHY is it we knowingly
permit our mind to ram us,
stab us and even maul us?
Is this the mindset we are
subcontracting to our
artificial intelligences?"

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224. 兕無所投其角虎無所
措其爪兵無所容其刃
夫何故以其無死地

“WHY is it there are so many
opposing cosmologies? That
I can’t throw my lot in
with anyone of them is
a good thing surely,
but, what do I know?”

225. 道生之德畜之物形之勢成之

“WHY is it, even when we don’t
need to be thinking in a certain
way about this that and the
other, we still continue
to do so anyway?
Stupidity’s intact way.”

226. 是以萬物莫不尊道
而貴德道之尊德之
貴夫莫之命常自然

“WHAT causes everything to be
and not be? If we say God

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then that settles it; so too Tao
or Nature. Perhaps, it is
in no need of a cause.”

227. 故道生之德畜之長之育
之亨之毒之養之覆之

“WHY is it we can’t be
satisfied with accepting the
mysterious? Let us call it a day
on using the scientific
method. Admittedly, it has
had a good run of it.”

228. 生而不有為而不恃
長而不宰是謂玄德

“WHY is it we can’t yet seem
to let go, even though
we know we should,
of the tendency to
anthropomorphise
reality? Even our AIs
we have now doing it.”

229. 天下有始以為天下母

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“WHY is it that when we believe we have
a hold on reality; that at long last
we think we know what it is,
it just like a morning haze
slips out of view?”

230. 既得"知"其母以"復"知
其子既知其子復守其母
沒身"其"不殆

“WHY is it we speak when
we ought to be listening;
stay silent: yet not listening,
when we ought to speak
up and speak out?”

231. 塞其兌閉其門終身不勤

“WHY is it that when we are
so busy with so many affairs,
we are no longer aware that
this is not all there is to life?
A case of intelligence
self-blindsided.”

232. 開其兌濟其事終身不救

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“HOWEVER came we to settle
with the idea: that by
observing the nanoscopic
we would be able to
comprehend the vastness of
the never-ending universe?”

233. 見小曰明守柔曰強

“IS it possible to claim with certainty
that anything is constant? Yes,
change is of a constancy of a kind.
Of a kind yes, but who knows
it is for sure?”

234. 用其光復歸其明無
遺身殃是為習常

“WHY is it say democratic,
theocratic or communistic
systems of human control never
really get it quite right?
What shall we say is their
default fault?”

235. 使我介然有知行

Page 74

於大道唯施是畏

“WHY is it we are so easily
distracted? How much of
our life is but the living out
of numerous distractions?
Can we at anytime still
be of our true way?”

236. 大道甚夷而民好徑

“WHY is it that everywhere we look
in the world; save for pockets,
there are huge differences in
the quality of human existence?
Have we no shame in front
of the sky visitors?”

237. 朝甚除田甚蕪倉甚虛服文綵

“WHY is it that what is
contrary to reality; not just
somewhat contrary to it,
but extremely contrary
to it, we firmly believe
in it? How can we

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be this way?”

238. 帶利劍厭飲食財貨有
餘是謂盜夸非道也哉

“HOW has it come to be that
we continue to perpetuate
the baffling notion:
that more than at any other
time in human history, we
are the most intelligent?”

239. 善建不拔善抱者不
脫子孫以祭祀不輟

“WHY is it we aren’t bringing into being
our out of this world self? Why are we
always so contented with just
being our terrestrial self?”

240. 修之於身其德乃真
修之於家其德乃餘

“WHAT is it about using our
artificial intelligences that
leaves us with little desire

Page 76

to culture ourselves morally?

Have we made ethics
a non-starter for AI?"

241. 修之於鄉其德乃長修之於國其
德乃豐修之於天下其德乃普

“WHY is it the case of late that long
held hand-me-down belief systems
and even isms while they still
seem to work well for others
no longer do so for me?”

242. 故以身觀身以家觀家以鄉觀
鄉以國觀國以天下觀天下

“WHY is it, even with
carefully observing realities
about us, we have this
somewhat perplexing feeling
that there is a lot more to
them than meets the eye?”

243. 吾何以知天下然哉以此

“WHY is it we so easily, almost

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so naturally forget: there is
still much of us that is of
the womb days, the infant,
toddler, child, teenager
and following?”

244. 含德之厚比於赤子

“WHY is it we have somehow
come to believe we are all
round weak, when in fact
we are quite strong? If
reflected upon we can see
we always have been.”

245. 蜂蠆虺蛇不螫猛獸不據攫
鳥不搏骨弱筋柔而握固

“WHY is it the most sacred,
natural and wondrous of
pleasurable acts: the sexual
union of male and female is
increasingly coming under
threat of extinction?”

246. 未知牝牡之合而全作精之至也

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“WHY is it that even though
great words of wisdom
have come down to us,
we are still finding ourselves
having to deal with a lot
of the same age-old
problems?”

247. 終日號而不嗟和之至也

“WHY is it with knowing
the power and beauty
of harmony: of living
harmoniously, we don't
live accordingly?
Is having knowledge merely
for the sake of knowing?”

248. 知和曰常知常曰明益
生曰祥心使氣曰強

“WHY are we still measuring
our existence in terms of
'young', 'middle-aged'
and 'old' and then
proceeding to live as if we

Page 79

really are in fact those terms?”

249. 物壯則老謂之不道不道早已

“WHY is it we talk so much about God
as if we know what or who God is?

Even our apostasy, atheism,
agnosticism, skepticism
and freethinking is
so full of talk.”

250. 知者不言言者不知

“WHY is it we allow so much
curt talk to prevail? Even our
artificial intelligences sound
curt. Why do we show so little
regard for another’s feelings?”

251. 塞其兌閉其門挫其銳解其
分和其光同其塵是謂玄同

“WHY is it people can feel at times
family, friends, acquaintances,
colleagues; in fact every human
being either living or long

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deceased is somehow
against them?”

252. 故不可得而親不可得而踈

“WHY have we let financial
profit become so crucial to
our lives? What will it
profit us if we gain every
financial reward we can yet
forfeit the planet?”

253. 不可得而利不可得而害

“WHY is it humanity continues
to continually continue
putting up with things we
should long ago have left go?
Why are we so
afraid to be noble?”

254. 不可得而貴不可得
而賤故為天下貴

“WHY is it when we have
peace we let war erupt?
Something is not right

Page 81

about what we consider
to be right.
War is not right.”

255. 以正治國以奇用兵以無事
取天下吾何以知其然哉

“WHY is it the world over we
are still seeing the reemergence
of great thieves: leaders who
are unashamedly stealing
even the most basic
rights of citizens?”

256. 以此天下多忌諱而民彌
貧民多利器國家滋昏

“WHY is it we seem to be
going along with the
problems we know will
happen with we making
more use of our artificial
intelligences and ignoring
the unknowns?”

257. 人多伎巧奇物滋起

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法令滋彰盜賊多有

“WHY is it people so easily follow good
example: good leadership; also so easily
bad example: bad leadership?
Shouldn't the good alone
be followed?”

258. 故聖人云我無為而民
自化我好靜而民自正

“WHY is it people think
living in harmony with oneself;
with others; with Nature: with
the Universe is too simple
a way to be living life?
Why do we complicate?”

259. 我無事而民自富我無欲而民自樸

“WHY is it we aren't yet wise
enough to differentiate
governance that is openly
manipulative and one that is
subtly so? Neither one nor
the other helps us to grow.”

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260. 其政悶悶其民淳淳
其政察察其民缺缺

“WHY is it we are still
clinging to the question:
Who knows what the
future will bring? Let us
abandon placing our
existence in time-frames:
timers.”

261. 禍兮福之所倚福兮
禍之所伏孰知其極

“WHY is it there seems to be
little or no end to both
individual and societal
deception? How many
more good words on it will
need to be said before
it stops?”

262. 其無正正復為奇善復
為妖人之迷其日固久

“WHY is it we still can't

Page 84

ponder our heads around
the idea that the Galilean was
not human like us;
nor that did he ever claim
to be by what he said,
done or didn't do?"

263. 是以聖人方而不割廉而
不虧直而不肆光而不燿

"WHY is it while we have
convinced ourselves
moderation is an ideal
way to act; to say govern,
we don't seem to realize
it is not as harmless as
we might think."

264. 治人事天莫若嗇

"WHAT would be an ideal way
to avoid finding ourselves
in a predicament where
restraint has now become our
only option? Why so often
do we self-entangle?"

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265. 夫唯嗇是謂早服早服謂之重積德

“WHY is it we limit our thoughts only

to what we and others know?

Why not make of such everyday

limits: doors to be

courteously opened

and gallantly entered?”

266. 重積德則無不克無

不克則莫知其極

“WHY is it we are still ruling

it over one another?

What is this up generation down

generation attachment we

have with being in charge?

Respect each other.”

267. 莫知其極可以有國

有國之母可以長久

“WHY is it we ignore the fact

that plants literally have

more of a connection with

the planet than we do; that

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they are the ones taking
the greatest care of it”

268. 是謂深根固柢
長生久視之道

“WHY is it we think managing
our day nightly lives
somehow needs to be
anything different from
say the beautiful way
the sun orbits the
planets about it?”

269. 治大國若烹小鮮

“WHY is it we still don’t know
what happens to the us that
has been all along us after we
seem to be no longer of
this orbiting place we call
home sweet home?”

270. 以道蒞天下其鬼不神非
其鬼不神其神不傷人

“HOW long; yes, how long

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more is it going to take before
we stop living the pretension
we are noble beings?
Cease warring and great
headway we will be making.”

271. 非其神不傷人聖人亦不傷
人夫兩不相傷故德交歸焉

“WHY is it small good-living countries
tend to be quite happy to remain
small, whereas large ones it
seems can’t be content with
just keeping to themselves?”

272. 大國者下流天下之交天下之牝

“HOW come we don’t say
‘female person’ instead of
‘female’ – ‘male person’
instead of ‘male’?
If we were to, it would
guarantee a whole new
level of leveling respect.”

273. 牝常以靜勝牡以靜為下

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“WHY are we still letting
ourselves be tied down by
the need to be forever
conquering? This need
begins with the individual
and with the individual
it must end.”

274. 故大國以下小國則取小國
小國以下大國則取大國

“WHY is it we misunderstand
things? A sensation which
in situ was felt to have been
wonderful, say making love,
isn't beyond that locus
meant to remain.”

275. 故或下以取或下而取

“WHAT do the immemorially
residing here cultures from
the about beyond think of the
way we have been living our
lives? Have they or will
they ever intervene?”

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276. 大國不過欲兼畜人
小國不過欲入事人

“WHY is it we don’t admit that
the idea of ‘a great state’ is
without a doubt an oxymoron?
There is more to the sun than
meets the eye – that is why
I am asking this why.”

277. 夫兩者各得其所欲大者宜為下

“WHY is it we could say bad is
the lowest state of good but
can’t and shouldn’t say good
is the highest state of bad?
Yet, know we don’t we,
good and bad are not two?”

278. 道者萬物之奧善人
之寶不善人之所保

“WHY is it I can’t fully trust sentences
generated by an artificial intelligence
as much as I would had they been
composed by a human being?

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Artificialnesses' doing.”

279. 美言可以市尊行可以加人

“WHY is there so much
cunningness in the world?
From the highest echelons
to the lowest is it in the west,
the east, north and south.
Machiavelli is having a field day.”

280. 人之不善何棄之有故立天子置三公
雖有拱璧以先駟馬不如坐進此道

“WHY is it we still cling to the belief in a
One Above all deities; belief in nothing
at all? Why again too, so many
neither here nor there
positions on such matters?”

281. 古之所以貴此道者何不曰以
求得有罪以免耶故為天下貴

“WHY is it we can't so easily
do the everyday difficult
things without having the

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feeling they are difficult
to do? How much of
the difficulty is of
our own thinking?”

282. 為無為事無事味無味
大小多少報怨以德

“WHY is it we are still holding
on to the conveniently
diverting idea that the
Universe was once
infinitesimally small
before it was astronomically
huge beyond huge?”

283. 圖難於其易為大於其細天下難
事必作於易天下大事必作於細

“WHY do we produce
monumental documents
such as the Universal
Declaration of Human
Rights when and as if by
a requirement of
convention we blatantly

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contravene them?”

284. 是以聖人終不為大故能成其大

“WHAT is about hindsight that
lets us feel that while
something was in fact very
difficult at the time, it is
now thought to have been
much more akin to easy?”

285. 夫輕諾必寡信多易必多難

“WHY is it we don’t accept
the difficult as just what it
is: a difficulty? Why do we
need to be trying to convince
ourselves it is easy when
clearly it is far from it?”

286. 是以聖人猶難之故終無難矣

“WHY is it we let things get out
of hand while we can still
stop them? Given that we have
been here innumerable times
before wouldn’t you think

Page 93

we would know? But no.”

287. 其安易持其未兆易謀

“WHY is it we seemingly
have no problem with letting
or even latently encouraging
the shattering of villages,
cities and biospheres; the
shattering of human life?”

288. 其脆易泮其微易散

“WHY is it we aren’t making
better use of our ability to
anticipate the possible
outcomes of our empty of
thoughts, our thoughts,
silences, words, inactions
and actions?”

289. 為之於未有治之於未亂

“WHAT will it be like when
a journey of a thousand light
years won’t be beginning
with a single step but

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rather an instantaneous
being there?
Distance not experienced.”

290. 合抱之木生於毫末九層之臺
起於累土千里之行始於足下

“ARE the sky visitors curious
at all about our familial
and societal backgrounds;
our ethnicities or histories:
conquests and assimilations?
If not, then what?”

291. 為者敗之執者失之是以聖
人無為故無敗無執故無失

“WHY is it we aren’t still paying
enough attention to the
conclusion of something as
we were to its commencement?
What in the in-between has
happened to our focus?”

292. 民之從事常於幾成而敗
之慎終如始則無敗事

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“WHY is it we distort desire?
Desire after all is a wonderful
part of life; it is what keeps
our breath strong and our
bones in harmonious
movement.”

293. 是以聖人欲不欲不貴難得之貨

“WHY is it, when we have
the chance later in life to do
so: we don’t explore that one
wondrous thought that has
since our youth been there in
the back of our minds?”

294. 學不學復衆人之所過以
輔萬物之自然而不敢為

“WHY is it we aren’t frightfully
aware that letting ourselves
remain ignorant requires no
effort whatsoever: just
stay as we are and there
ignorant we can be
indefinitely.”

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295. 古之善為道者非
以明民將以愚之

“WHY is it we continue to place
so much trust in sacred text
knowledge; in worldwide web
and AI generated knowledge,
and so little in the
intuitive and imaginative?”

296. 民之難治以其智多

“WHY is it what we think we
know: when it comes to how
best to govern a country,
turns out more often than
not to be not so? Why so
carelessly do we let
such things go?”

297. 故以智治國國之賊
不以智治國國之福

“WHY is it I keep having
this feeling that the scientific
method, though wonderful

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in itself, is ultimately seeking
to dethrone mystery; even
to eradicate it?”

298. 知此兩者亦稽式常
知稽式是謂玄德

“WHAT is it about reality
that gives us the impression
we can and ought to confine
it to language and knowledge?
Mystery surely is not a
mystery for nothing.”

299. 玄德深矣遠矣與物
反矣然後乃至大順

“WHY is it our conversations
sound like rivers impatiently
pounding into seawaters?
Look to the sea to see
receiving in action; to
the rivers for the how
of returning.”

300. 江海所以能為百谷王者以

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其善下之故能為百谷王

“WHY yet haven’t we learnt how to
live in wondrous harmony; why
are we still letting ourselves
be entangled with the idea
that we have to have
leaders and followers?”

301. 是以聖人欲上民必以言
下之欲先民必以身後之

“WHY is it we are experiencing
this headlong confident feeling
that our artificial intelligences
won’t let us down: will ever
faithfully be performing
on our behalf?”

302. 是以聖人處上而民
不重處前而民不害

“WHY is it we get so weary of
our historically renowned
religious, philosophical
and political figures?”

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Their profound words are with us,
yes; but where is the potency?"

303. 是以天下樂推而不厭以其
不爭故天下莫能與之爭

“WHY is it we look upon all
other religious beliefs to be
in some form or another
inferior to our own? Or to
put it even more bluntly;
our own to be by far
the superior?"

304. 天下皆謂我道大似不肖夫唯大
故似不肖若肖久矣其細也夫

“WHY is it there is such a
great chasm at times between
what the individual holds as
precious and what a
government expects us to
hold as precious? Who
ought to change?"

305. 我有三寶持而保之一曰慈

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二曰儉三曰不敢為天下先

“WHY is it our courage isn’t
courageous enough to let and
have itself fully believe that
what is morally wrong is
precisely that: morally wrong?
Does it have to be spelt out?”

306. 慈故能勇儉故能廣不敢
為天下先故能成器長

“WHY have we so many words
for ‘narrow-minded’ such as:
intolerant, provincial, blinkered,
dogmatic, entrenched,
prejudiced, bigoted,
sectarian, racist, sexist?”

307. 今舍慈且勇舍儉且廣舍後且先死矣

“WHY is it the use of brute
force: savage violence is still
so very much in vogue?
Why are we still acting
as if we are totally stupid;

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unreasoning to the
nth degree?”

308. 夫慈以戰則勝以守則
固天將救之以慈衛之

“WHY is it everyone has
a ready word on what not
one is and has to pause
ponder and even search for
what one is? Such it is
becoming so when with
much we do not know.”

309. 善為士者不武善戰者不怒善
勝敵者不與善用人者為之下

“WHY is it we are discarding
the profound insights into
reality carefree-ly hue'd out by
generations upon generations
in favour of captive adoration
of the scientific method?”

310. 是謂不爭之德是謂用人
之力是謂配天古之極

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“FROM how far back in
human history should we
begin our reevaluation: on
how we might create a more
noble future for ourselves?
Would a hundred years say
be enough?”

311. 用兵有言吾不敢為主而
為客不敢進寸而退尺

“ARE we really going forward
or is that just some kind of
an illusion all of our own
making? Perhaps, we are in
fact going backward; who
knows even at a standstill.”

312. 是謂行無行攘無臂扔無敵執無兵

“WHY is it we have a habit of
taking very serious matters
lightly and treating
unbelievably insignificant
matters as if they are the
most pressing of all

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our problems?”

313. 禍莫大於輕敵輕敵幾喪吾
寶故抗兵相加哀者勝矣

“WHY is it we think this that and the
other is so difficult to do? When we
stop and think about it, they may not
be difficult at all. Why are we
so into difficulty-making?”

314. 吾言甚易知甚易行
天下莫能知莫能行

“WHY is it I think there is
something behind reality that
has it be while at the same
time can think there isn’t;
again too can so easily hold
neither of these positions?”

315. 言有宗事有君夫唯無知是以不我知

“WHY is it we don’t yet realize
there is so much more to us
than our religions, philosophies,

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sciences or even artificial
intelligences can tell us?
Why are we not ourselves?”

316. 知我者希則我者貴
是以聖人被褐懷玉

“WHY is it we can’t accept
that always to have plenty of
not-knowing out in front of
us is the very best way to be?
I have as such no wish to be
done with not knowing.”

317. 知不知上不知知病

“WHY is it; seeing that being
in pain is such an unpleasant
experience for anyone of
any age, we would then
intentionally hurt or let be
hurt another human being?”

318. 夫唯病病是以不病聖人
不病以其病病是以不病

“WHY do we convince

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ourselves the past; be it our
personal, societal even global past
is powerless to impact our lives?

Here this know not so:
histories do in fact impact.”

319. 民不畏威則大威至

“WHY is it we weary ourselves
so much by interfering in our
very own lives? No one is
doing anything to it; we
ourselves are doing the doing.
Let go of self-wearying.”

320. 無狎其所居無厭其所
生夫唯不厭是以不厭

“WHY is the self-publishing
of one’s ideas considered
not worthy of any serious
consideration? Yet, is not that
what Nature is always doing:
self-publishing?”

321. 是以聖人自知不自見自

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愛不自貴故去彼取此

“WHY is it we are doing wrong?
What we have always been
taught is wrong must surely
still be wrong, mustn't it?
Yet then why are there old
wrongs now purporting
to be rights?”

322. 勇於敢則殺勇於不敢則活
此兩者或利或害天之所惡
孰知其故是以聖人猶難之

“WHAT is about our way of
striving that is stressing us out so
much? How can we learn to take
striving in our stride: to just
be with enjoying the ride?
Stylishly stress.”

323. 天之道不爭而善勝不言而善
應不召而自來繹然而善謀

“WHY is it we don't appreciate
that whatever thought we let

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enter our mind is there to stay
though we may never again recall it?
A wondrous thought-receptacle
is our mind.”

324. 天網恢恢疎而不失

“WHY is it we are becoming
so insensitive to the horrific
plight of others? Could it
have anything to do with
them being presented
on screens: no smells;
there we are not?”

325. 民不畏死奈何以死懼之

“WHY is it fear is so frightening?
Yet even though it most
certainly is; how come we can
still rise above it as if it
seemingly no longer has any
of that initial effect on us?”

326. 若使民常畏死而為奇
者吾得執而殺之孰敢

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“WHY is it we can’t so easily
accept that we are not good
at doing some things: that
others are much better; more
capable? Yield: be of a
courage to let them do it.”

327. 常有司殺者殺夫司殺者是大匠斲
夫代大匠斲者希有不傷其手矣

“WHY is it the world is the way
it is, in that the rich are getting
richer and the poor all the
poorer? Is this just a timeless
cliché? No; its truth is of
today as yesterday.”

328. 民之飢以其上食稅之多是以飢

“IS it the way that indeed
people are naturally difficult
to govern or that in fact
they don’t need to be
governed in the first place?
Why is governance a
problem-maker?”

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329. 民之難治以其上之有為是以難治

“WHY is it dictators assume
they have some kind of right
to make life unbearable for
people? From what or from
whom; from when or
where came they by such
a derangement?”

330. 民之輕死以其求生之厚是以輕死

“WHAT would the world be like
if everyone everywhere were to
value the value of everyone’s life?
There must be a reason why
I am feeling the need to
pose such a question.”

331. 夫唯無以生為者是賢於貴生

“WHY is it we are the way we
are from say a biological point
of view? To be able to walk
is surely a wonderful
thing but it would be nice

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too if like a bird we
could fly.”

332. 人之生也柔弱其死也堅強

“WHY is it we look upon tree
leaves in early summer as
being ever so beautiful;
the same leaves in autumn:
though now dry and dead as
also being ever so beautiful?”

333. 萬物草木之生也柔脆其死也枯槁

“WHY is it we think in terms
of life and death? What do
we really know about
anything? In the over near
yesterdays did we not think
Earth to be alike unto
a flat disc?”

334. 故堅強者死之徒柔弱生之徒

“HAS the human way anything
to teach say the mountains
and rivers; the trees and fields;

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the birds and fishes; honeybees
and ants: something that
only we do well?"

335. 是以兵強則不勝木強則
共強大處下柔弱處上

"WAS there a time way back
in a time of unknown, when
in all respects we compared
our life with Nature?

Why have we abandoned such
a correspondence, association
and comparison?"

336. 天之道其猶張弓與高者抑之下
者舉之有餘者損之不足者補之

"WHY is it we think we are
entitled to take and take from
the planet and nothing give back?
What we call natural resources: for
our uses alone, Nature calls
its existence."

337. 天之道損有餘而補不足人之

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道則不然損不足以奉有餘

“WHY are there so many
un-atheistic atheists,
un-Christian Christians,
un-Islamic Muslims,
un-Jewish Jews,
un-Hinduistic Hindus and
un-Buddhistic Buddhists
in the world today?”

338. 孰能有餘以奉天下唯有道者

“SHOULD a longevous self-publishing
writer write right up to their very
last breath in spite of their
writings never having gained
any societal recognition
whatsoever? Emphatically
yes oh yes they should for
who knows such a fine
body of work could in future
times well prove to be an
exceptional treasure trove of
terrestrial insights into life.”

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339. 是以聖人為而不恃功
成而不處其不欲見賢

“AND this will seem
unscientific, but why haven’t
the oceans yet over flown
their coastal boundaries and
submerged the entire planet?

The posing of such a
question returns my mind
to wonderment.”

340. 天下莫柔弱於水而攻堅強
者莫之能勝其無以易之

“WHY is it we are fully aware of
what needs to be done; knows what
actually can be done and yet and
by choice we end up doing neither?
We know how to share the planet
equally; how to live in the
fullness of peace but and
by choice we don’t.
Why?”

341. 弱之勝強柔之勝剛

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天下莫不知莫能行

“WHY is it everything at times
sounds, feels and appears to be
paradoxical? Why are blatantly
self-contradictory statements
being put forth and accepted
as non-contradictory?”

342. 是以聖人云受國之垢是謂社稷主
受國不祥是謂天下王正言若反

“WHY is it we don’t yet realize
that the culturing and
sustaining of deep grudges
is a potent catalyst for the
sudden outbreak of accusations,
quarrels, fights, wars; perhaps
even annihilations?”

343. 和大怨必有餘怨安可以為善
是以聖人執左契而不責於人

“WHY is it we believe
the Universe is always on
the side of the good

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person given that reality
would seem to suggest
otherwise for are not the
not so good doing quite
well for themselves?”

344. 有德司契無德司徹
天道無親常與善人

“IS it really wise for us
to be stupefyingly
letting ourselves become
increasingly dependent
upon our artificial
intelligences?

What of our humanness?
Will we be allowed
remain human?”

345. 小國寡民使有什伯之器而
不用使民重死而不遠徙

“WHY is it the leaders of the nations
don't make peace with each other?
When they do we will no longer have
any need for armaments; nuclear

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weapons: that whole nauseating
war medium. This let us take good
note: from ancient times the various
visitors from beyond the blue be black
starry dome have by their inactions
made it quite obvious to us that
they unlike us have no interest
whatsoever in fighting with us.
You foes are only us.”

346. 雖有舟輿無所乘之雖有甲兵無所陳之

“WHETHER it would be really wise
of us to discard all our wondrous
advancements and to mentally,
emotionally and even physically return
ourselves to being of the way simple ways
of say our Paleolithic ancestors?
Why go so far back? Then how about
five hundred years ago? Why go so
far back? Then how about one
hundred years ago? Why go so
far back? Then how about ten
years ago? Why go so far back?
Then how about two years

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ago even two hours ago?
Enough with the going backness;
let us remain here where we
are for who knows it may
well be leading us to a
superlative future.”

347. 使民復結繩而用之甘其
食美其服安其居樂其俗

“WHY is it given the countless millennia
we have already been living on this
enrichingly beautiful planet, we still
haven’t yet been able to go even
for a single day without having
fought with each other or worse?
Have we some sort of rare condition
or what or is our DNA somehow
faulty seeing that we just can’t
seem to live and let live in peace
and harmony with each other?
Is it any wonder the manifold
visitors from beyond are
taking their time having
anything to do with us?”

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348. 鄰國相望雞犬之聲相
聞民至老死不相往來

“HOW came it to be that we have
allowed words to have so much
of a hold on us, given that we know
quite well they are as ephemeral
as any a cirrus cloud, if
not even more so?
Yet, having said that where
would we be without them?”

349. 信言不美美言不信善者不辯辯者不善

“IS it possible to be with a profound
intellectual knowledge of so
many things, yet to have
not a clue of anything?
So too do I wonder, is it possible
to be with a shallow knowledge
of so many things and yet have a
deeply intuitive knowledge
of so much? Yes and no to both
questions might be coming near
to an understanding and acceptance

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that not everything is necessarily
meant to be understood either
intellectually or intuitively.”

350. 知者不博博者不知

“WHY is it we thoughtlessly allow
ourselves to be guided by the great
words of the great ones of old without
we first having reflected deeply on them
to confirm; to verify if they are indeed
beneficial or not to this our own day
and beyond? Some may contain very
subtle entanglements. We need as
such to be on our guard, especially,
when it comes to those of the
founders of religious traditions
and social reformers.
Our artificial intelligences too are
becoming very skilled at making
old sayings ring ever so true.
Then it is up to you to
all do them anew.”

351. 聖人不積既以為人己

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愈有既以與人己愈多

“WHY is it we say so many good things but don’t do so many good things; don’t say so many good things yet do so many good things? Why are we such contradictions in our talking and not doing; in our not talking and doing? Have we unbeknownst to ourselves wrapped ourselves up in some kind of ever tightening self-competitiveness? Let us let go of such restrictiveness: let us say and do good; not say and not do anything that isn’t good. If you have to ask what the good is then you have not yet commenced your journey of self-being discovery. That is the call of the new day: Be a true self-being.”

352. 天之道利而不害聖人之道為而不爭

Biography

Richard Mc Sweeney: Risteárd Mac Suibhne of the isle of Éire 愛爾蘭的小島 is a self-designated Planet Earth philosopher of the natural happy kind; a self-originator who enjoys expressing his insights in a charmingly personal prose-poetic style.

Richard the son of Risteárd Mac Suibhne (1923-1985)
of Baile Mhúirne & Siobhán Ní hÉalaighthe
of Gleannúir (1936-2021).
He is a native of Mainistir Fhear Muighe.

He was a PhD candidate in Chinese Taoist Philosophy
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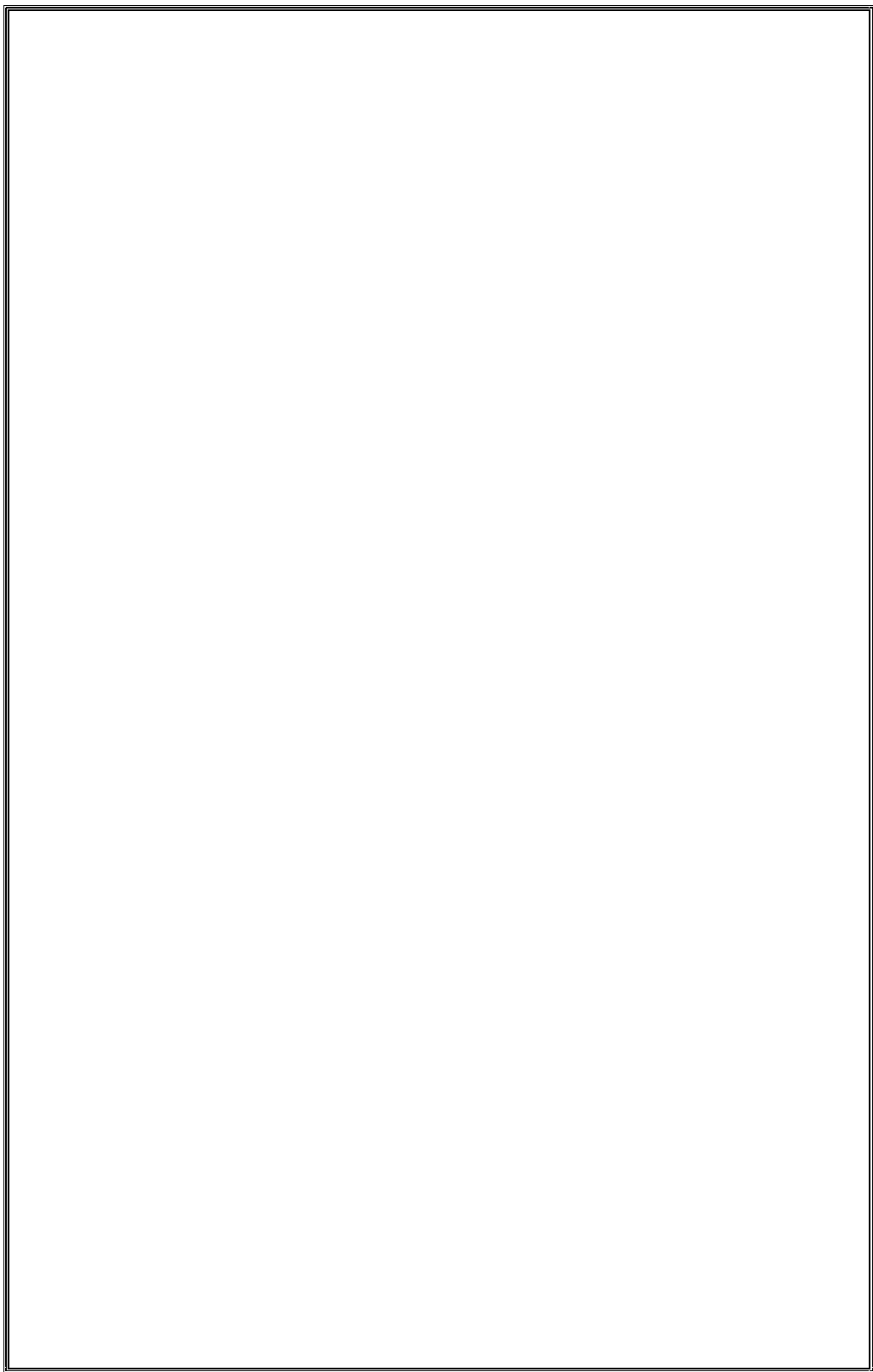
He lived in Korea for thirteen years; in the Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia for three years and a further three
in the United Arab Emirates respectively.

He is happily married to Lee Sung-ja 李勝子 of Seoul.
Since 2001 they have been living in Ireland.
Their son and daughter are also happily married
and have children of their own.

He enjoys reading Classical Chinese 漢字.

He likes to say:

“Always I keep before me the belief
that my best originality is yet to come.”



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